

## Groundings

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# 1st Annual Walter Rodney Speakers Series (2013)

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## WALTER RODNEY SPEAKER'S SERIES ---- REPORT

**The 1st Annual Walter Rodney Speaker's Series** *January - May, 2013*

Thursdays, 5-7pm at the Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library

### OVERVIEW

Professor Jesse Benjamin, with generous base-support from a Georgia Humanities Council Grant, the AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library, the Walter Rodney Foundation, Kennesaw State University, and Clark Atlanta University, established a (now annual) public lecture series that explores the life and work of Dr. Walter Rodney and his core contributions to Pan-Africanism, development theory, emancipatory pedagogy, and theories of race and class in the Caribbean, Africa and the rest of the world. This project seeks to keep Dr. Rodney's scholarship, perspectives and memory alive; to introduce or re-introduce a cross-section of the Georgia public to this great man; and to explore how his legacy remains relevant to the issues, struggles, and theories of the present day.

The concept was respectfully and "flagrantly" copied from the innovative pedagogic example of the late Dr. Vincent Harding (a former comrade of Dr. Rodney), who conducted a groundbreaking public lecture series and associated Morehouse College class around the life and work of Martin Luther King in 2012. Like that inspirational series, also held at the AUC's Robert W. Woodruff Library, the Walter Rodney Speakers Series combines a weekly public lecture or discussion panel with a cohort of Atlanta University Center and Kennesaw State University students who attend for college credit, do assigned readings, and stay for at least an extra hour of discussion and analysis. This emerging praxis seeks to emulate the models of Rodney and Harding in its delivery, while combining community members, high school students, college and graduate students, and senior scholars in complex dialogue about urgent contemporary social issues and theories.

### READINGS

#### BOOKS:

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1972 (rev'd in 1981); now published by Pambazuka Press.

Walter Rodney, *Walter Rodney Speaks*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 1990.

Walter Rodney, *Groundings with my Brothers*, London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1969 (and Chicago: Research Associates School Times Publications, 1990).

Walter Rodney, *History of the Guyanese Working People*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.

Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1955, 2001.

Derrick E. White, *The Challenge of Blackness: The Institute of the Black World and Political Activism in the 1970s*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011.

#### ARTICLES:

Walter Rodney, "Upper Guinea and the Significance of the Origins of Africans Enslaved in the New World," *The Journal of Negro History* LIV(4), October 1969.

Anthony Bogues, "Black Power, Decolonization, and Caribbean Politics: Walter Rodney and the Politics of The Groundings with My Brothers," *Boundary 2*, 36:1, 2009, pp. 127-147.

### STUDENT RESPONSE

"The experiences granted to me through this class were remarkable and have shaped my perspective as a student and now activist immensely. From the first day driving down to the Woodruff to getting to meet interesting people and professors from around the globe who were passionate about what they were sharing with us, the whole experience of this class was unforgettable."

- Madyson Price, first year student at KSU



# WALTER RODNEY

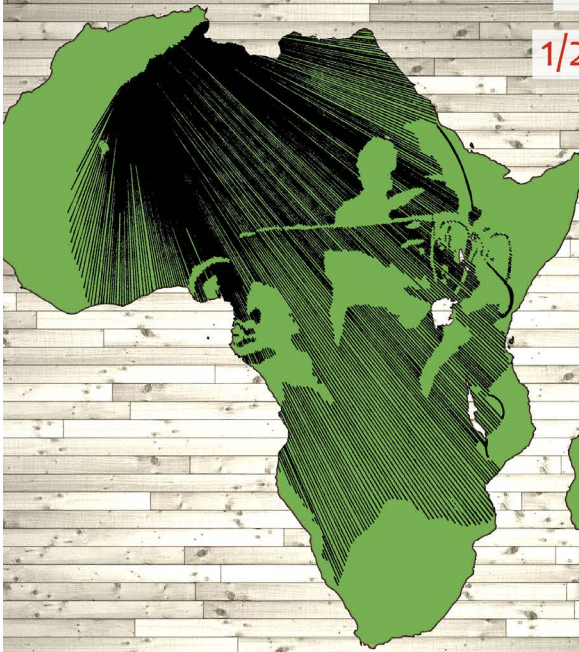
## PUBLIC SPEAKERS SERIES

Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library

Thursdays, 5:00-6:00pm - Spring 2013

111 James P. Brawley Drive SW, Atlanta, GA 30314

Asterisks [\*] note date and/or location change



1/17

*"My Life's Journey with Walter Rodney"*  
Dr. Patricia Rodney, Walter Rodney Foundation; w/ Asha Rodney, Esq.  
Followed by a guided tour of the Walter Rodney Papers/Archives  
with Andrea Jackson, Woodruff Library Archivist

1/24

*"The Significance of Walter Rodney for Continental & Diasporic Africans"*  
Dr. Anani Dzidzienyo, Brown University

1/31

*"Walter Rodney in East Africa: The Dar School & Beyond"*  
Dr. Jesse Benjamin, Kennesaw State University

2/7

*"African Diaspora in Latin America: Hip-Hop as Social Movement"*  
BocaFloja, Underground Afro-Mexican Hip-Hop Artist  
Roundtable: J. Benjamin, N. Figueroa, E. Silva, G. Soldatenko, S. Vaught

2/14

*"Rodney & the African/Arab Spring Uprisings"*  
Dr. Firoze Manji, Founder/Editor of Daraja, fr. Pambazuka

\*2/22

*"From DuBois to Rodney: Atlanta's Institute of the Black World"*  
Dr. Bill Strickland, Susan Ross, Dr. Derrick White  
NOTE: Held Friday at the W.E.B. DuBois & the Wings of Atlanta  
Conference, Clark Atlanta University, 233 James P. Brawley Dr.

2/28

*"Groundings With My Brothers: 1968 & Black Power Worldwide"*  
Dr. Akinyele Umoja, Georgia State University

\*3/13

Film: *"The Terror & The Time,"* Guiana Shield Media Project  
Kali Akuno, Malcolm X Grassroots Movement  
NOTE: Held at Auburn Ave. Research Library, 101 Auburn Ave. NE

\*3/22-23

*"10th Annual Walter Rodney Symposium"*  
Keynote Speaker - Howard Dodson, Howard University  
NOTE: Many speakers & panelists over this 2-Day event,  
Including: Dr. the Honorable Ralph Gonsalves & Paget Henry, Details TBA

3/28

*"Gender in Pan-African Theory & Practice"*  
Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Spelman College

4/4

*"Global Health: A Focus on Africa & the African Diaspora"*  
Dr. Patricia Rodney, PhD, MPH; Dr. Noble Maseru, PhD, MPH, Cincinnati  
Health Commissioner; Dr. Kanini Rodney, MD, MPH/MBA;  
Dr. Mark Armstrong, Naturopath, Ahimki Institute, Atlanta

4/18

*"The Upper Guinea Coast & Walter Rodney's Rewriting of History"*  
Dr. Hashim Gibrill, Clark Atlanta University  
And *"A First Hand Report on the Elections in Venezuela  
& the State of the Bolivarian Revolution"*  
Jesus "Chucho" Garcia, Founder, the Afro-Venezuelan Network

4/25

*"Reading Rodney Through the Lyrics of Fela Kuti"* by Babacar MBow,  
Broward County Library Division Programs & Exhibits Coordinator

FREE & OPEN  
TO THE PUBLIC



FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT SERIES ORGANIZER:  
JBENJAMIN@KENNESAW.EDU

Sponsored by:







Dr. Akinyele Umoja, Georgia State University, presents "Groundings With My Brothers: 1968 and Black Power Worldwide" to a large audience of students and community members.



Dr. Hashim Gibrill, Clark Atlanta University, lectures on "Rodney's History of the Upper Guinea Coast: Rewriting History and the World."



Susan Ross, Dr. Derrick White, and Dr. Bill Strickland pose with Dr. Jesse Benjamin at the W.E.B. DuBois & the Wings of Atl. Conference (CAU) after a panel on Dr. Walter Rodney.



The Clark Atlanta University and Kennesaw State University student participants of the class-based aspect of the Speakers' Series pose with their professor, Dr. Jesse Benjamin.



From L to R: Dr. Jesse Benjamin, Dr. Patricia Rodney, Dr. Mark Armstrong, community leader and State Representative "Able" Mable Thomas, and Dr. Nobel Maseru before Healthcare panel.



Kennesaw State professors lead a roundtable on the African diaspora in Latin America (from L to R): Dr. Neysa Figueroa, Dr. Ernesto Silva, Dr. Seneca Vaught, and Dr. Gabriel Soldatenko.



Dr. Beverley Guy-Sheftall delivers "Gender in Pan-African Theory and Practice."





Post-Panel photo op (From L to R): Dr. Hashim Gibrill, Dr. Jesse Benjamin, Jesus "Chucho" Garcia, and Dr. Patricia Rodney.



Babacar MBow on "Reading Rodney Through the Lyrics of Fela Kuti."



Outspoken social commentator and rapper from Mexico City, BocaFloja, speaks to the "African Diaspora in Latin America: Hip-Hop as Social Movement."



The panel on Global Health featured (from L to R) Dr. Mark Armstrong, Dr. Patricia Rodney, and Dr. Nobel Maseru.



Dr. Patricia Rodney poses with Dr. Anani Dzidzienyo after his lecture on "The Significance of Walter Rodney for Continental and Diasporic Africans."



Jesus "Chucho" Garcia with translator José G. Pérez during the former's talk on current Venezuelan politics.



The audience is engaged during Dr. Firoze Manji's presentation on "The Relevance of Walter Rodney to the Uprisings on the African Continent Today: The Importance of Memory," where, among other things, he explained that poverty is not a normal human condition, but instead we need to explain "processes of impoverishment."